

didn't open any exploration offshore. Increasing costs: No new energy.

Now, what is the solution? Well, the solution is what the American people know, and that is that it's a broad array of items. It's conservation. Americans are doing an incredible job of trying to conserve. We're using less energy than we did last year. Conservation is the key, and we can all do more. It's finding alternative fuel, that fuel that will allow the 21st century to be an American energy 21st century. That will take a little while.

So, in the near term, in the short term, what's the solution? Mr. Speaker, you know what it is. It's what your constituents tell you about. It's increasing supply. It is increasing the supply of energy, American energy for Americans. How do you do that? America has incredible resources.

Onshore resources: We ought to be doing more exploration. We're only using 6 percent of the eligible land to be leased to find American energy for Americans onshore.

Offshore: Deep-sea exploration. The vast majority of Americans support environmentally sensitive and sound deep-sea exploration. We ought to be doing that. Only 3 percent of the available territory is being utilized currently.

Utilizing clean coal technology: We now have technology available that allows us to use coal of which America is, remarkably, the world's greatest repository of coal in the world, and we ought to be using that for clean coal technology.

Oil shale, which exists in our western area: There are more than 2 trillion barrels of oil that could be extracted from oil shale in environmentally sensitive and sound ways.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, we're doing none of that. Now, it's not because there isn't legislation for it. In fact, we have bills right here at the desk: H.R. 3089, the No More Excuses Energy Act; H.R. 2279, the Expand American Refining Capacity Act; H.R. 5656, to Repeal the Ban on Acquiring Alternative Fuels; H.R. 2208, the Coal Liquid Fuel Act. All sorts of bills exist. They exist, but we aren't allowed a vote.

As you know, the majority party, the Democrat leadership, beholden to leftist individuals, will not allow a vote on the floor of the House. All we're asking is for a vote. We're not asking for a guaranteed outcome, just a vote. Give us a vote, Mr. Speaker. Why not? What are you afraid of? Why not have a vote? Why not respond to the demand of the American people and increase American energy for Americans? Bring down gas prices. We demand a vote. We hope that next week we'll see it.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. McCOTTER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. McCOTTER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

FUNDING THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HOMETOWN SECURITY BY EARMARK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FLAKE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to highlight an earmark in the fiscal 2009 Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill. Now, the reason I'm having to do this is that it looks like we won't even be considering this bill on the floor, and therefore, it may be that all of the earmarks, the hundreds of earmarks that were approved in the committee for that bill, may be dumped into the bill, just air-dropped into the bill, at the last minute without even being considered by the House. That's simply not right.

This earmark is for the Kentucky-based National Institute for Hometown Security. When I came across this earmark, I was surprised at the dollar amount. In fact, it was the second largest earmark requested by an individual in the Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill. Now, I would submit that spending like this pushes the Federal Treasury threat level past orange, or high risk, right into the red zone, or severe category.

According to the Web site of the earmark recipient, the institute sponsor suggested organizing the higher education institutions of Kentucky to more effectively compete for research funds and projects aimed at improving homeland security. It appears that the purpose of the consortium and of the institute is to make Kentucky better at receiving Federal funds, arguably an admirable purpose. It's simply too bad that it's paid for with Federal funds.

The institute goes on to say that the institute is designed to help develop new technologies and devices that commercialize them. Now, with taxpayers shouldering over \$5 trillion in Federal debt, why do we need to fund programs for the benefit of commercializing products?

This institute was created in 2004. According to the Department of Homeland Security, the agency which is charged with overseeing this, the Department has never requested funds for the National Institute for Hometown Security. Why are we doing this through an earmark?

I must ask the question: Would this institute exist in the first place if select members of a powerful committee did not direct the spending for it?

Since receiving its first earmark, the institute has received more than \$60 million in Federal earmarks, including \$12 million in 2005, \$20 million in 2006, \$20 million in 2007, \$11 million in 2008. If this earmark is approved, the institute will have received \$74 million in earmark funding. For what? What has

the center produced or achieved that can possibly be worth this kind of money? Will we continue to earmark for this institute indefinitely?

I am certain, if I had the opportunity to challenge this earmark on the House floor during regular order, the sponsor might be glad to highlight what he believes the institute's achievements are. My response would simply be: If this institute is so important, if it's so needed for the Department of Homeland Security, why do you have to earmark funding for it? Why doesn't the Department seek its own funding and say this is a vital institute? "We ought to provide funding within the budget. We're going to request it." No. The money has to be earmarked by an appropriator.

In 2005, a Washington Post story provided details on the institute. It indicated that the sponsor of the earmark has, as a senior appropriator, "encouraged contractors to move into his district and has announced millions of dollars in antiterrorism research at Kentucky colleges and universities."

That same article highlighted the sponsor's having taken credit for \$206 million in homeland security research-related funding for the State. The Post article indicated: "So much Federal money for high-tech homeland security projects has flowed to southeastern Kentucky, that those who are there have taken to calling it 'Silicon Holler' with the institute and the university consortium at the heart of it."

I would submit that handling this funding in any other way than through earmarks might put a damper on what appears to be a spoil system where certain powerful Members are able to shower their districts with taxpayer dollars. If we had regular order and a regular authorization-appropriation oversight process, we wouldn't be earmarking funds like this.

I would inquire also as to what, if any, oversight the Appropriations Committee has undertaken to ensure that the \$60 million that has already been given to the institute was worthwhile and why an additional \$11 million is warranted.

I would submit also that, when taxpayers send their dollars to Washington, they expect more than an earmarking system that is absent real oversight and that seems to just give the keys to the Treasury to a few powerful appropriators.

Mr. Speaker, I will soon be circulating a letter to Speaker PELOSI and to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. OBEY, asking them to ensure that if we don't have regular order and if we don't go through the appropriations process that we not air-drop earmarks into an omnibus bill when this body has not had a chance to even see them, let alone to adequately vet them.

I urge my colleagues to do better with the taxpayers' money. We should be better stewards. We have a time-honored process in this body of authorization, appropriation and oversight

that we have been ignoring for years, and the taxpayers are the worse for it. We cannot continue to do that. This institution is a better body than that, and we ought to give more respect to it.

AMERICA'S CHALLENGES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, as we all know from listening to our colleagues and, even more importantly, from listening to the American people, the United States is currently facing a host of critical and complex challenges that have an enormous impact on our daily lives.

Fuel prices have skyrocketed, creating a ripple effect throughout our entire economy. We pay ever increasing prices at the pump, at the supermarket and nearly everywhere we buy the everyday goods that our families need. We all feel the strain of these rising prices. At the same time, we see our economy softening because of the housing crisis.

The threat of radical extremism persists throughout much of the globe, including, of course, in Afghanistan and in Iraq, where our brave men and women in uniform are fighting. We, of course, constantly face the problem of illegal immigration, which exposes the weaknesses of our borders and further strains our economy.

Madam Speaker, these challenges are as diverse as they are complicated. They did not develop overnight, but have arisen over time. They contribute to a growing and pervasive frustration by the American people. These challenges are daunting, but they are far from hopeless.

I believe the key to finding the solutions to the challenges of the 21st century is not to view them as isolated problems. We need a broad, visionary approach that sees these issues for what they are: the interconnected challenges of a smaller and smaller world.

Growing demand for energy in both China and India, combined with volatility in the Middle East, central Asia and the Niger Delta contribute to rising gas prices here in the United States. Natural disasters combined with rising fuel prices contribute to a global food crisis that threatens a billion people. Weak and corrupt governments perpetuate poverty in the developing world, which is exacerbated by the growing food crisis, contributing to growing unrest and ripe conditions for radical extremism.

Every single day, Madam Speaker, every day, people who have not been screened for a criminal or for a terrorist background enter our country through porous borders. Of course, we know all too painfully well the cabal of

20 hijackers from 7 years ago this coming September 11. They fed off the deep discontent that poverty and ignorance breed. They trained in Afghanistan, received funding through international financing schemes. They entered the United States by way of a broken immigration system and perpetrated, as we all know, the worst terrorist attack on U.S. soil.

These issues are not isolated from each other. Any 21st century agenda for America must recognize the fundamental nature of these issues and take a comprehensive view towards solving them. I believe this demands an approach that looks inward as well as outward.

First and foremost, we need to look at how American policy is affecting American problems, and we need to find an American solution. Second, we need to look at the reality of this interconnected world about which I've spoken and give our approach a global view.

Our energy crisis provides a good illustration of exactly what I mean. There are a number of contributing factors that are driving up prices, as I've mentioned. There is growing demand abroad. There is volatility in many oil-producing regions, but we are also suffering because we have failed here at home to develop our own domestic solutions.

Technology in the oil and gas industry has become so advanced that we can explore and drill without damaging our environment. Yet we have vast resources untapped in ANWR and way off our shores. An increased supply of oil does very little good without the capacity to refine it. Yet we have not built a new refinery in three decades.

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We all know that nuclear energy is the cleanest, safest, most cost-effective energy source known to man, and yet we have also not built a new reactor in three decades. Furthermore, despite the fact that we in the United States and in my State of California are the world's leaders in innovation, we have not invested nearly, nearly enough in new green technologies that diminish our dependence on fossil fuels and allow us to use the energy we have more efficiently.

Madam Speaker, these are American failures. We need a comprehensive overhaul of our national energy policy to increase our domestic production, improve efficiency, and make us more self-sufficient. But at the same time, there is no escaping the global oil market and the reality that prices are driven by global factors. By promoting our own responsible energy agenda, we don't extricate ourselves from the global market. We shape it, we shape it, Madam Speaker, through our leadership. By increasing supply while diminishing demand through technology improvements, we can help to stabilize and reduce global prices.

By neutralizing the acute crises caused by out-of-control prices, we can

help to reduce the volatility that drives up prices to begin with. In other words, we need a uniquely American solution without losing sight of our place of leadership in this interconnected world.

Madam Speaker, the same is very true for the problem of illegal immigration. Failure on this issue is a failure of our border security. We cannot address this problem without addressing our borders. The solution begins with substantial resources for the border patrol and increased technology, including fencing along our border. We simply must strengthen and modernize our first line of defense.

Yet we would be hopelessly shortsighted if we didn't recognize that the problem does not begin, the problem does not begin at the border. It begins in the poor villages of our neighbors to the south. Nowhere else on Earth do a developed and a developing country share a 2,000-mile border. Nowhere else on the face of the earth is a border of 2,000 miles existing between a developed and a developing nation. As we seek to hold back the tide of illegal immigration with a strong border, we must also endeavor to diminish the flow of that tide in the first place.

In the long run, Madam Speaker, growth and opportunity in Mexico is the key to ending the scourge of illegal immigration. As their economy grows and jobs are created, the desire to attempt to cross our border will greatly diminish. Because of this, a permanent solution to the problem demands that Mexico pursue sound economic policies so that there is opportunity on both sides of the Rio Grande.

Our policy toward Mexico must be focused on encouraging them to be accountable to the Mexican people for making the necessary economic reforms which will lead to this important growth. And because strong economies require strong institutions, we must also encourage them to pursue efforts to build their own capacity.

Greater bilateral engagement will ensure Mexico's continued effort to liberalize their economy, to modernize and train their law enforcement and judiciary is important, to build the capacity of their Federal, State, and local government institution is also key, to strengthen the rule of law and provide an environment where economic opportunity can flourish is critically important. It will also ensure that we have an able and effective partner in our efforts to stem the illegal flow of people and narcotics across our border.

Madam Speaker, we have already seen, and this doesn't get much attention, but we have already seen some positive results from our engagements. Mexico has taken a number of important steps toward reform, liberalization, and institutional capacity building. President Felipe Calderon put forth a bold reform agenda in his presidential campaign. Since then, he has taken very positive steps in instituting